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Using Dictation Tests to Improve English Language Proficiency in EFL Situations

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The paper is specifically designed for undergraduate students how to improve and develop their academic English language proficiency. Dictation, though widely known as a testing device, can be considered a good learning technique to improve learners' proficiency. Language proficiency is also a fundamental part of a liberal arts education and a valuable skill in English as a foreign Language (EFL) situation. The focus of English Language education in EFL situation is language as a social practice, that is, language as a bundle of skills to be used for communication and language as a method for understanding cultural systems. This paper provides an analysis on learning English for students who participated in after class activity, dictation test. The students were undergraduate students with limited proficiency in English and were required to take English course work for graduation. The results from this report suggest that the students who attended dictation quiz regularly received high dictation grades. What is more important is that they also received high final grades when they were compared to those who had low dictation grades.The results show dictation in L2 learning seems to have a large positive transfer to reading, writing and especially speaking a English language.

[EFL/dictation/grade/language proficiency/level]

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Theoretical Background

Dictation is one of the techniques used in Second language (L2) learning and intergrative testing. There have been studies that support its value in foreign language

learning. Davies et al. (1999) state dictation is an integrative test in that it simultaneously assesses a range of skills, including listening, and involves processing in real time. In particular, its effectiveness in language testing has very often been discussed. Davis and Rinvolucri (1988) state decoding the sounds of English and recoding them in writing is a major learning task and Frodesen (1991) insists that dictation can be an effective way to address grammatical errors in writing that may be the result of erroneous aural perception of English. Dictation can help students diagnose and correct these kinds of errors as well as others. Montalvan (1990) reported that as students develop their aural comprehension of meaning and the relationship among segments of language, they are learning grammar.

Despite claims such as these from respected methodologists, dictation is not widely used in EFL programs. Likewise, it has long been ignored in most teacher training programs. This report supports studies that have claimed dictation as an effected learning method.

Oller (1971) claims the proponents of dictation advocate it as a good method for measuring language proficiency due to the high correlation it has shown with other integrative language proficiency tests such as Cloze and TOEFL. Oller and Streiff (1975) believe that as dictation triggers the internalized expectancy grammar of the learner, it can give us information about the learner's overall language proficiency.

Sawyer and Silver (1961) define four types of dictation that can be used in language learning. They are Phonemic Item dictation, Phonemic Text dictation, and Orthographic Item dictation. The last one involves the dictating of individual words in isolation for transcription. This is similar to the traditional spelling test. Not a few foreign language teachers are familiar with this dictation exercise and this is the method administered to students enrolled in English courses.

This method not only reinforces the spelling/sound correlations of English, it also reveals comprehension and grammatical weaknesses in learners. Teachers can use this method to analyze students' weaknesses and address them in future lessons for optimal learning.

Dictation provides a technique for motivating language learners to understand spoken language, especially in a teaching-learning situation. Dictation in a foreign language is a more highly skilled task than L2 learners generally realized. It makes simultaneous demands of the learners to deal with an ongoing stream of auditory input. It presumes learners have to have a good command of the orthography of the language and calls for an ability to comprehend an auditory message without the help of any visuals.

Educational studies (Oller, 1971; Davies et al., 1999) suggest promising ways to use dictation in the classroom, but no agreement seems to have been reached so far, as is seen below on the nature of its contributions to the profession: "dictation as a testing and teaching device" (Gelman 1967, p. 21), "dictation is not a teaching exercise, it is a testing exercise" (Cartledge, 1968), "dictation clearly seems to be the best single measure of the

totality of English language skills being tested" (Oiler, 1975), "dictation is primarily a test of spelling" (Somaratne,1957), "one purpose of this activity is to serve as a learning device, a concurrent pedagogical purpose would be to serve as a testing device to check on students progress" (Sutherland 1967).

Experimental studies (Oller, 1971; Valette, 1964) tend to show that dictation is highly reliable as a device to assess a learner's general language ability and its validity as a testing device seems to be in good favor with advocates of dictation. Oiler (1971) reports that correlation of dictation with the total of the placement test was higher than that of any other subtest (vocabulary, grammar, composition and phonology) with the total, and that dictation also correlated more highly with each subtest than did any other subtest. He suggests in his conclusion that the learner's performance in dictation is the outcome of not separate, discrete skills but integrated skills in the aggregate. However, there is a cautious observation. Valette (1964) comments she has on the results of her experimental data make us less optimistic about the efficacy of dictation for a testing purpose. The following are the findings she had from her analysis:

> It is evident that the dictation, when administered as an examination, tests the student's proficiency in committing to paper the phrases read. Moreover, this proficiency improves with regular practice. However, if the dictee is to comprise the unique test to determine the student's overall knowledge of French, this can be done only in classes where little classroom time is devoted to dictation.

2. Research Questions

This paper's view is that dictation, used as a learning experience, provides an effective channel for developing the ability to comprehend the spoken forms of the language; it provides a means through which separate skills are activated to be linked together for listening comprehension; it also serves as a vehicle through which the learners are enabled to join together the written and spoken functions of the language. The learners, as we will see in the next section, employ a variety of mental strategies to accurately write a dictation ; dictation is not only useful as an exercise in the spelling skill but also as an exercise in cultivating integrative skills in processing auditory information through the ear. It is the internalized strategies for dictation that are most important to the learners in trying to understand the intended message in the language.

In other that students develop and improve English language skills they receive 4 hours of course instruction per week on speaking, reading, and writing for this study. The program offers 4 levels of courses. To complement course work, students participate in after class activities. Activities include listening laboratory, dictation, and phrasal quiz.

Listening Laboratory includes two 30-minute sessions per week. Contents of the Listening Lab coincide with Episodes learned in classroom. Dictation test is given once a week. Dictation test sentences or phrases coincide with the Listening Lab and Episodes learned in classroom. Phrasal quiz test is given once a week. Phrasal quiz contents coincide with Reading classes (The students have to take four level reading classes for two years).

Each day, teachers collect the dictation test to evaluate the kinds of errors being made. Evaluating transcriptions will require care in terms of distinguishing between comprehension errors and spelling errors. Comprehension errors include both phonological mistakes and grammatical mistakes. A phonological mistake would be the spelling of the word *physics* as *fyzics* a grammatical mistake would be transcribing *Yesterday he worked* as *Yesterday he work*. We can define spelling errors as those that would likely be made by a native speaker (e.g., *receive / recieve*). From this data teachers gained insight into the strengths and weaknesses of each student. Lessons are prepared to address errors made by a majority of the class. Students participated in optional activities, including tutoring sessions. The English curriculum addresses the following questions in this study:

(1) What are the activities outside of course work that students need to meet in order to become proficient in English as a foreign language?
(2) What correlation is shown between Dictation and Level of Conversation Class?
(3) What is the correlation diction and Final conversation grade?

II. METHOD

1. Subjects

Subjects were 741 undergraduate students who enrolled in the General English course (Reading and Conversation) from a university located in Gyunggi. They took dictation test once a week for 12 weeks.

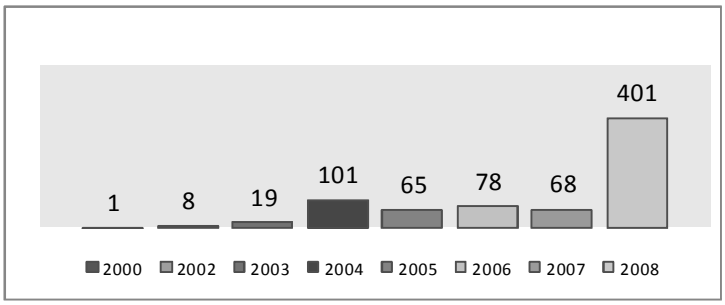
1) Measurement of Variables

Year of Class: The classes were divided into the year of entrance to the University. For the second semester of 2008 there were classes of 2000, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2006, 2007, and 2008. Except for the students in class of 2008 and 2000, the years 2002 to 2007 participated in English Conversation classes that they had not taken as freshmen or were repeating the courses.

The class population distribution indicated that 54%, N=401 students out of total N=741 were in class of 2008. The small number of cases in 2000, 2002, and 2003 were due to returning students who had not completed the required English Conversation or were repeating the classes. As can be seen in Figure 1, the distribution is positively skewed (Figure 1). This means that most of the students taking English Conversation were in 2005, 2006, and 2008 classes.

FIGURE 1

Number of Students for Each Class



Number of students in each class of year were as follows: .1%, N=1 for class of 2000; .1%, N=8 for class of 2002; 2.6%, N=19 for class of 2003; 13.6%, N=101 for class of 2004; 8.8%, N=65 for class of 2005; 10.5%, N=78 for class of 2006; 9.2%, N=68 for class of 2007; and 54.1%,N=401 for class of 2008.

Conversation Levels: Students were placed in level according to their test results, final and entrance exams. There were four levels of conversation. Contents for each level were as follows:

Level 1: Episode 1, 2, 3

Level 2: Episode 14, 15, 16

Level 3: Episode 17, 18, 19

Level 4: Episode 20, 22, 26

Number of students in each level was as follows: 76.5%, N=567 for level 2; 9.0%, N=67 for level 3; and 14.4%, N=107 for level 4.

Dictation grades: The ranges of dictation grades were from 0 for non-attendance to 10. A grade of 10 did not indicate a perfect dictation score. It was an indication of a near perfect grade. A grade of 1 meant 1% of 100%. A total of 741 students attended dictation quiz given once a week. Students took dictation quiz for 12 weeks out of a 16 week semester.

Final grades: At the end of each semester final exam was given to all students enrolled in the English classes. The exam was given simultaneously to all students. The distribution

of the final grades determined the grades as well as placement of levels. The criteria for placement of levels were determined by analyzing statistical results of mean, mode, median and standard deviation.

2) Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics was used to examine the number of cases, mean, mode, median, percentage, and standard deviation. Cross tabulation was performed to compare two variables.

To examine the relations between independent and dependent variables, analysis of variance and correlation were performed using the SPSS 15.0. For the analysis, dictation and final grades were designated as the dependent variables and the year of class and levels as independent variables. To examine the mean difference between the year of class and dictation grades, analysis of variance was performed. To examine the mean difference between the levels and dictation grades, analysis of variance was performed. To examine the mean differences between the year of class and final grades, analysis of variance was performed. To examine the mean differences between levels and final grades, analysis of variance was performed. To examine the relationship between dictation and final grades, correlation was performed.

III. RESULTS

1. Number of Students in Each Class of Year by Levels

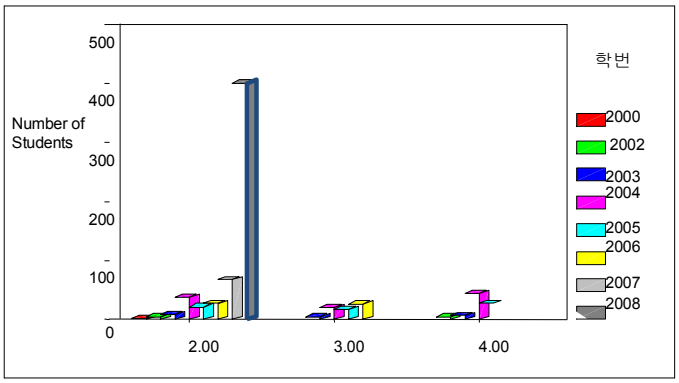
Number of students in each class of year by conversation levels was as follows: For the class of 2000 there was only level 2, where N=1, 0.2% within level and 100% within class. For the class of 2002 there were levels 2 and 4. Level 2 had N=4, 0.7% within level and 50% within class. Level 4 had N=4, 0.7% within level and 50% within class. For the class of 2003 there were N=8, 1.4% within level and 42.1% within class for level 2. For level 3, N=4, 6.0% within level and 21.1% within class. For level 4, N=7, 6.5% within level and 36.8% within class. For the class of 2004 there were N=37, 6.5% within level and 36.6% within class for level 2. For level 3, N=20, 29.9% within level and 19.8% within class. For level 4, N=44, 41.1% within level and 43.6% within class. For the class of 2005 there were N=21, 3.7% within level and 32.3% within class for level 2. For level 3, N=20, 29.9% within level and 19.8% within class. For level 4, N=44, 25.2% within level and 41.5% within class.

For the class of 2006 there were N=27, 4.8% within level and 34.6% within class for level 2. For level 3, N=26, 38.8% within level and 33.3% within class. For level 4, N=25, 23.4% within level and 32.1% within class.

There were only level 2 for the classes of 2007 and 2008. For the class of 2007 there were N=68, 12% within level and 100% within class. For the class of 2008 there were N=401, 70.7% within level and 100% within class.

FIGURE 2

Number of Students in Each Class of Year by Levels



2. Dictation Grades

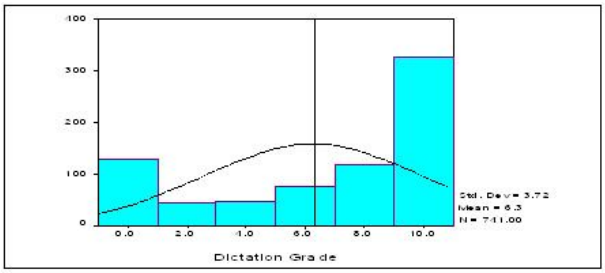
The ranges of dictation grades were from 0 for non-attendance to 10. A grade of 10 did not indicate a perfect dictation score. It was an indication of a near perfect grade. A grade of 1 meant 1% of 100%. A total of 741 students attended dictation quiz given once a week. Students took dictation quiz for 12 weeks out of a 16-week semester.

Overall Dictation Grade: The distribution of the dictation grade is positively skewed (Figure 2). More than 40%, N=326 students who attended dictation quiz which was given once a week received 9 or 10 dictation grades. The average dictation grade is M=6.3, SD=3.72 is indicated in Figure 2 by a reference line.

Number of students in each dictation grade were as follows: 17.4%, N=129 for a grade of 0; 3.3%, N=24 for a grade of 1; 2.7%, N=20 for a grade of 2; 3.0%, N=22 for a grade of 3; 3.4%, N=25 for a grade of 4; 4.9%, N=36 for a grade of 5; 5.3%, N=39 for a grade of 6; 7.3%, N=54 for a grade of 7; 8.9%, N=62 for a grade of 8; 21.9%, N=162 for a grade of 9; and 22.1%, N=164 for a grade of 10. The mode for dictation grade was 10 with 164 receiving a grade of 10. The mean dictation grade was M=6.3, SD=3.72 (Figure 3).

FIGURE 3

Dictation Grade Distribution



1) Comparison of Dictation Grades by Levels

The ranges of dictation grades were from 0 for non-attendance to 10. A grade of 10 did not indicate a perfect dictation score. It is an indication of a near perfect grade. A grade of 1 meant 1% of 100%. Students were placed in their levels according to their test results, final and entrance exams.

TABLE 1

Dictation Grades by Levels

Grade	Levels			
	2	**3**	**4**	**Total**
0	90	11	28	129
1	16	1	7	24
2	17	2	1	20
3	12	4	6	22
4	15	4	6	25
5	28	2	6	36
6	23	10	6	39
7	36	11	7	54
8	51	4	11	66
9	139	5	18	162
10	140	13	11	164
total	567	67	107	741

The students who did not attend dictation quiz and subsequently receiving a grade of zero (0) were 17%, N=129. Table 1 presents dictation grade distributions for each level. For level 2 the distribution is positively skewed. That is, more students received higher dictation grade than lower ones. Approximately 60% of the students within level 2 received a grade of 8 or higher in dictation. For level 3, the distribution presents that more

students received dictation grade of 6, 7 and 10. The number of students in each dictation grade was about the same for level 4.

Table 1 indictes that N=129 students who received a grade of zero within each level were as follows: N=90 within level 2, N=11 within level 3, and N=28 in level 4. Thus, approximately 16% students within level 2 received a grade of 0. Also, 16.4% within level 3 and 26% within level 4 received a grade of 0 for dictation. Students who received a grade of 1, N=24, within each level were as follows: N=16 within level 2, N=1 within level 3, and N=7 within level 4. Thus, approximately 3% students within level 2 received a grade of 1. Also, 1.5% within level 3 and 6.5% within level 4 received a grade of 1 for dictation. Students who received a grade of 2, N=20, within each level were as follows: N=17 within level 2, N=2 within level 3, and N=1 within level 4. Thus, approximately 3% students within level 2 received a grade of 2. Also, 3% within level 3 and .9% within level 4 received a grade of 2 for dictation.

Students who received a grade of 3, N=22, within each level were as follows: N=12 within level 2, N=4 within level 3, and N=6 within level 4. Thus, approximately 2% students within level 2 received a grade of 3. Also, 6% within level 3 and 5.6% within level 4 received a grade of 3 for dictation.

Students who received a grade of 4, N=25, within each level were as follows: N=15 within level 2, N=4 within level 3, and N=6 within level 4. Thus, approximately 3% students within level 2 received a grade of 4. Also, 6% within level 3 and 6% within level 4 received a grade of 4 for dictation.

Students who received a grade of 5, N=36, within each level were as follows: N=28 within level 2, N=2 within level 3, and N=6 within level 4. Thus, approximately 5% students within level 2 received a grade of 5. Also, 3% within level 3 and 6% within level 4 received a grade of 5 for dictation.

Students who received a grade of 6, N=39, within each level were as follows: N=23 within level 2, N=10 within level 3, and N=6 within level 4. Thus, approximately 4% students within level 2 received a grade of 6. Also, 15% within level 3 and 6% within level 4 received a grade of 6 for dictation.

Students who received a grade of 7, N=54, within each level were as follows: N=36 within level 2, N=11 within level 3, and N=7 within level 4. Thus, approximately 6% students within level 2 received a grade of 7. Also, 16% within level 3 and 7% within level 4 received a grade of 7 for dictation.

Students who received a grade of 8, N=66, within each level were as follows: N=51 within level 2, N=4 within level 3, and N=11 within level 4. Thus, approximately 9% students within level 2 received a grade of 8. Also, 6% within level 3 and 10% within level 4 received a grade of 8 for dictation.

Students who received a grade of 9, N=162, within each level were as follows: N=139 within level 2, N=5 within level 3, and N=18 within level 4. Thus, approximately 25% students within level 2 received a grade of 9. Also, 8% within level 3 and 17% within level 4 received a grade of 9 for dictation.

Students who received a grade of 10, N=164, within each level were as follows: N=140 within level 2, N=13 within level 3, and N=11 within level 4. Thus, approximately 19% students within level 2 received a grade of 10. Also, 2% within level 3 and 2% within level 4 received a grade of 10 for dictation.

2) Comparing Mean Difference: Dictation Grades by Levels

Table 2 represents comparison of the mean of dictation grades, M=6.27, SD=3.72, across each level. Level 2 mean was M=6.59, SD=3.67. Level 3 is M=5.78, SD=3.44. Level 4 is M=4.92, SD=3.81. There was a significant level difference, F=9.98, df=2, 738, p=.00 (Table 3). The highest mean dictation grade was in level 2 where majority of the students, approximately 71%, N=401, were class of 2008. Majority of Levels 3 and 4 students were returning or transferring students. This result indicated that current students had better grasp of English since they had been exposed to English without an interruption.

FIGURE 4

Mean Dictation Grades by Levels

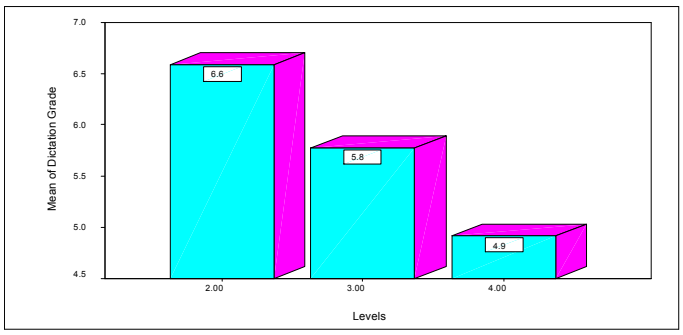


TABLE 2

Mean of Dictation Grades by Levels

Level	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
2.00	6.59	567	3.67
3.00	5.78	67	3.44
4.00	4.92	107	3.81
Total	6.27	741	3.72

TABLE 3
Comparing Mean of Dictation Grades by Levels

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	269.62	2	134.81	9.98	.00
Within Groups	9973.31	738	13.51		
Total	10242.93	740			

3. Final Grade

At the end of each semester a final exam was given to all students enrolled in English classes. The exam was given at the same time to all students. The distribution of the final grades determined the grades as well as placement of levels. The criteria for placement of levels were determined by analyzing statistical results of mean, mode, median and standard deviation.

TABLE 4
Comparing Mean of Dictation Grades by Levels

Final Grades	N	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1-10	8	1.1	1.1	1.1
11-20	8	1.1	1.1	2.3
21-30	11	1.5	1.6	3.9
31-40	23	3.1	3.3	7.2
41-50	36	4.9	5.2	12.3
51-60	56	7.6	8.0	20.4
61-70	116	15.7	16.6	37.0
71-80	160	21.6	23.0	60.0
81-90	248	33.5	35.6	95.6
91-100	31	4.2	4.4	100.0
Total	697	94.1	100.0	
Missing	44	5.9		
G. Total	**741**	**100.0**		

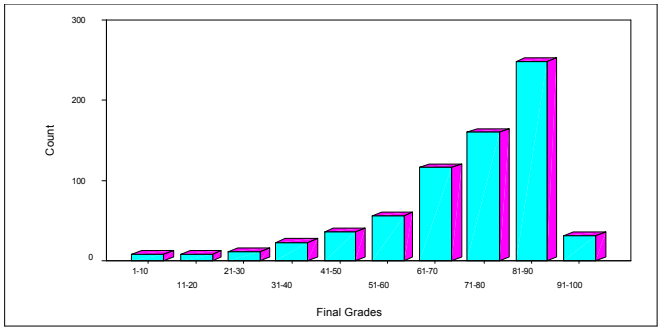
The final grades had been recoded into increments of 10 to determine the number of students in each 10% category. The distribution in Table 4 shows that the majority of

students received above 60%. Table 4 represents the distribution of final grades in each 10% category. Approximately 38%, N=279, received a final grade of 81 or better.

Table 4 represents the breakdown of final grades in increments of 10. Approximately 1%, N=8, fell in the score range of 1-10. For the final score range of 11-20, 8 students or 1% of the students fell in this range. For the score range of 21-30, there are 11 students or 1.5%. For the score range of 31-40, there are 23 students or 3.1%. For the score range of 41-50, there are 36 students or 4.9%. For the score range of 51-60, there are 56 students or 7.6%. For the score range of 61-70, there are 116 students or 15.7%. For the score range of 71-80, there are 160 students or 15.7%. For the score range of 81-90, there are 248 students or 33.5%. For the score range of 91-100, there are 31 students or 4.2%. The highest number of students is in the score range of 81-90. The second highest is in 71-80. There are few possible reasons for positively skewed distribution. One, the test was low in difficulty. Two, due to high exposure of English (8 times a week), students had a good grasp of the language. It will be interesting to compare the final grades across each class of year and across each level (Figure 5).

FIGURE 5

Final Grades



1) Comparison of Final Grades within Each Year of Class

At the end of each semester final exam was administered to all students enrolled in English coursework. The exam was given at the same time to all students. The classes were divided into the year of entrance to the University. For first semester of 2008 there were classes of 2000, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2006, 2007, and 2008.

The results indicated that students in the class of 2008, N=401, received the highest mean final grade, M=71.56, SD=22.44. The next highest mean final grade, M=66.09, SD=25.14 was in the class of 2004. Table 5 shows that the distribution for mean of final

grades across each year of class is slightly positively skewed. Students in the classes of 2006, 2007, and 2008 were at the high end of the final grades.

TABLE 5
Comparing Mean of Dictation Grades by Levels

Class	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
2000	1	61.0	
2002	8	53.0	33.6
2003	19	54.9	26.4
2004	101	66.1	25.1
2005	65	58.4	27.8
2006	78	63.8	22.0
2007	68	63.8	25.3
2008	401	71.6	22.4
Missing	44		
Total	741	67.5	24.2

Comparison of final grades across each year of class is presented in Table 5. The distribution of final grades was as follows: The class of 2000 had a mean of 61, M=61. There was no distribution within 2000 because there was only 1 student; for the class of 2002, M=53, SD=33.6; for 2003, M=54.9, SD=26.4; for 2004, M=66.1, SD=25.1; for 2005, M=58.4, SD=27.8; for 2006, M=63.8, SD=22; for 2007, M=63.8, SD=25.3; and for 2008, M=71.6, SD=22.4.

There was a significant class difference, F=4.8, df=7, 733, p=.00 (Table 6). The highest mean final grade was in the class of 2008. Majority of classes 2000, 2002-2007 students were returning or transferring students. This result indicated that current students and students who have taken English classes recently had better grasp of English since they have been exposed to English without an interruption.

TABLE 6
Comparing of Final Grades across Each Class of Year

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	18930.3	7	2704.3	4.8	.00
Within Groups	414271.0	733	565.2		
Total	433201.3	740			

2) Comparison of Final Grades within Each Level

At the end of each semester final exam was given to all students enrolled in English classes. The exam was given simultaneously to all students. Students were placed in level according to their test results, final and entrance exams. There were four conversation levels.

The results indicated that students in level 2, N=401, received the highest mean final grade, M=71.56, SD=22.44. The next highest mean final grade, M=66.09, SD=25.14 was in the class of 2004. Table 5 shows that the distributions for mean of final grades across each year.

Comparison of final grades across each level is presented in Table 7. The distribution of final grades within each level was as follows: Level 2 has a mean of 69.2, M=69.2, SD=23.4; for level 3, M=57.2, SD=29.1; and for level 4, M=64.5, SD=23.2.

There was a significant level difference, F=8.8, df=2, 738, p=.00. The highest mean final grade is in level 2. This result indicated that current students had better grasp of English since they have been exposed to English without an interruption.

TABLE 7

Final Grade across Each Level

Level	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
2	567	69.2	23.4
3	67	57.2	29.1
4	107	64.5	23.2
Total	741	67.5	24.2

3) Comparison of Final and Dictation Grades

At the end of each semester final exam was given to all students enrolled in English classes. The exam was given at the same time to all students. The ranges of dictation grades were from 0 for nonattendance to 10. A grade of 10 did not indicate a perfect dictation score. It was an indication of a near perfect grade. A grade of 1 means 1% of 100%. A total of 741 students attended dictation quiz given once a week. Students took dictation quiz for 12 weeks out of a 16-week semester.

The results indicated that students with high dictation grades also received high mean final grades. Table 8 shows the distributions for mean of final grades and dictation grades.

Comparison of final grades and dictation grades is presented in Table 8. The distribution of final grades across dictation grades are as follows: For the dictation grade of 0, the final grade was, M=32.2, SD=26.9; for the dictation grade of 1, M=57.3, SD=19.4; for the

dictation grade of 2, M=62.6, SD=10.5; for the dictation grade of 3, M=54.6, SD=19.3; for the dictation grade of 4, M=61.9, SD=20.5; for the dictation grade of 5, M=65.1, SD=19.1; for the dictation grade of 6, M=69.9, SD=11.5; for the dictation grade of 7, M=68.1, SD=16.8 for the dictation grade of 8, M=78.5, SD=7.3 for the dictation grade of 9, M=80.5, SD=8.5 and for the dictation grade of 10, M=83.1, SD=8.2.

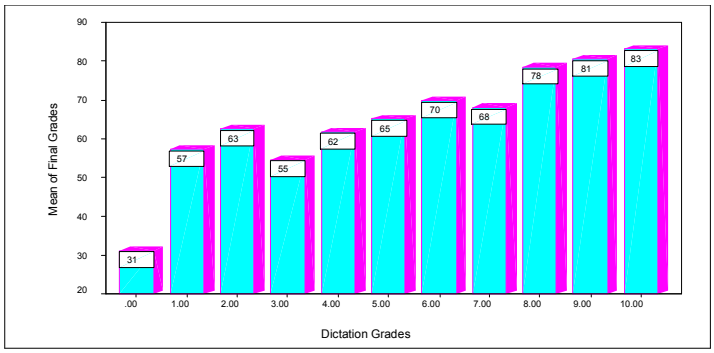
TABLE 8

Dictation Grades and Final Conversation Grade

N	Dictation Grade	Conversation Final Grade (M)	Conversation Final Grade (SD)
129	0	32.2	26.9
24	1	57.3	19.4
20	2	62.6	10.5
22	3	54.6	19.3
25	4	61.9	20.5
36	5	65.1	19.1
39	6	69.9	11.5
54	7	68.1	16.8
66	8	78.5	7.3
162	9	80.5	8.5
164	10	83.1	8.2
Total	741	67.5	24.2

FIGURE 6

Final Grades and Dictation Grades



There was a significant correlation between final and dictation grades, r=.74, N=741, p=.00 (Table 9). The students in the highest mean dictation grades also received the highest mean final grade. The distribution of the final grades across dictations grades showed that final grades tend to increase with increase in dictation grades. This result indicated that students and students who had taken dictation quizzes as prescribed by the class requirements had better grasp of English since they have had training in listening.

TABLE 9
Correlation: Dictation Grades and Final Conversation Grade

		Final	Dictation
Final	Pearson Correlation	1.00	.74
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.	.00
	N	741	74
Dictation	Pearson Correlation	.74	1.00
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.00	.
	N	741	741

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

Normal dictation requires students to make an accurate transcription of a dictated passage, and is a valuable exercise in which you have to know not just spelling but syntax and morphology as well in order to be able to accurately transcribe the spoken language. This paper provides an analysis on learning English for students who participated in after class activity, dictation test. The students were undergraduate students with limited proficiency in English and were required to take English course work for graduation. Although this action study was not as fruitful as expected, it provided me with the chance to reflect on the effect of dictation. The following is a summary of the primary findings:

The class population distribution indicated that 54%, N=410, of the total number of students, N=741, were in class of 2008. Number of students in each level indicated that 76.5%, N=567, are in level 2. Each class of year by levels distribution indicated that almost 71%, N=401, of the class of 2008 were level 2 students. The students who did not attend dictation quiz and subsequently receiving a grade of zero (0) were 17%, N=129. The mean dictation grade was 6.3 and SD=3.72. The mean dictation grade for level 2 was 6.6, level 3 was 5.8, and level 4 was 4.9. Approximately 60% of the students in level 2 received a grade of 8 or higher. Approximately 38%, N=279, received a final grade of 81 or better.

The class of 2008 had the highest mean final grade, M=71, SD=22.4. There was a significant class difference, F=4.8, df=7, 733, p=0. The students in level 2, N=401, received the highest mean final grade of M=.71.6, SD=22.4. There was a significant level difference, F=8.8, df=2, 738, p=0.There was a significant relationship, r=.74, between dictation and final grades. The higher the dictation grade, the higher the final grade.

The results from this report suggest that the students who attended dictation test regularly received high dictation grades. What is more important is that they also received high final grades when compared to those who had low dictation grades.

There are many possible answers for the results obtained in this report.

One, dictations gave practice in correct forms of speech.

Two, dictations gave students valuable practice.

Three, dictations allowed students to receive feedback on the kind of errors they were prone to make.

Four, dictations helped students to retain meaningful phrases or whole sentences.

Five, dictations served as an excellent review exercise.

Six, dictations gave students practice in comprehending and transcribing clear English phrases and sentences.

Most of all, dictations were good indicator of overall language ability. In short, dictation test helps students to integrate and develop all four language skills.

Although the method presented in this study is expected to strengthen students' four language skills from the dictation, the authors consider this present study will be served as an indication that the use of the experimental method will improve EFL learners' improving foreign language skill in EFL situation. The variables that might affect the improvement of learners' ability need to be examined by other studies and further research like the present study should be made under a variety of conditions.

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APPENDIX

Sample of **Partial Dictation** A

Listen to each these sentences. Write the words youhear to complete the conversations.

A: She (1) _____ born in Guatemala. And now she's a human rights activitist in Latin America. In 1992 she won the Nobel Peace (2) _____.

B: Wow. What (3) _____ she do?

A: Well, she risked her life to help her people. She's still working for social change. She's a very intelligent woman and a great (4) _____.

B: She sounds like a really (5) _____ person.

A: Strong, and (6) _____, too.

Sample of **Partial Dictation** B

(script)

Justin, Susan and Emi are good friends at school. One day a party was held in their city. So they decided to go there. At first, Justin didn't enjoy the party, because he couldn't talk to anyone. He said the key to good communication was to be confident. After Susan heard this, she introduced him to one of her friends, Keith. Justin and Keith talked about their school, families, hobbies and sports. They looked very happy. Justin got a note with her telephone number from Keith before he left the party. He said to her, "Thank you very

much. I had a very good time today. I will call you tomorrow. See you. Good night."

Questions:

1. Where was the party held?
2. Why didn't Justin enjoy the party at first?
3. Who introduced Justin to Keith?
4. Whose telephone number did Justin get?
5. When will Justin call her?

Sample of **Final Test** (Abbreviated)

Section A : Listening

Choose an appropriate response.

1. I don't know how David does it.
   a. I don't understand why David didn't do the work either.
   b. I am also surprised at how much he accomplished.
   c. I am also surprised he didn't complete his project.
   d. I don't understand why he didn't come home earlier.
2. Susan is always doing something.
   a. I agree. She always gets bored.
   b. I agree. She sure keeps herself busy.
   c. I agree. She never forgets anything.
   d. I agree. She doesn't get it.
3. We never see each other.
   a. I don't know how you manage to do it.
   b. I know. I wish I had your energy.
   c. What do you propose to do about it?
   d. My job keeps me around.
4. My day was just fine and so was my night.
   a. You mean you slept well last night?
   b. You mean you worked a full day and part of the night?
   c. You mean you can't wait to go to bed?
   d. You mean you were tired last night?
5. Is Paul an active person?
   a. Yes, he likes to sit down.
   b. Yes, he just can't sit around and do nothing.
   c. Yes, he is always bored.
   d. No, he can't sit down and do something. (abbreviated)

Section B

Find an appropriate use for the word or phrase.

1. Lullabies
   a. My mother used to sing lullabies for my baby brother.

b. Hard Rock Café plays lullabies all the time.
c. My favorite hobby is lullabies.
d. Babies like to eat lullabies.

2. Fits right in with
   a. My new pants fit right in with my size.
   b. The house fits right in the street.
   c. Every Monday would fit right in with some things.
   d. My schedule fits right in with yours.
3. Encourage
   a. I was able to accomplish a great deal because you encouraged me.
   b. I had to discontinue my work because you encouraged me.
   c. He didn't get a job because his boss encouraged him.
   d. She managed to fail her class with my encouragement.
4. Queer
   a. I thought Susan was queer today because she was acting the same way.
   b. I hear the usual queer sound.
   c. It was queer to stop in the middle of nowhere.
   d. I was queer to wake up every morning.
5. Torn
   a. I am torn because I feel uncertain about my future.
   b. I am torn because I know exactly what to do later.
   c. I am torn because I am very happy about my future.
   d. I am torn because I have my act together.
6. Accept
   a. The plan accepts the cancelled offer.
   b. I was glad that my teacher accepted the assignment even though it was late.
   c. I failed the course because the teacher accepted all the late assignments.
   d. Can you accept with me? (abbreviated)

Examples in: English
Applicable Languages: English
Applicable Levels: College and University

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